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# ARRIVAL CHECK

## Policy Directive

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Date Approved: April, 2011

Projected Review Date: April, 2014

### 1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education requires all School Boards to have a Safe Arrival Policy for their elementary schools. It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, for all elementary schools to develop and implement an arrival check program as part of the daily procedure of school attendance taking. Parents, guardians and caregivers have the prime responsibility for the safety of their children. In order to enable the school to account for any pupil's absence, parents/guardians/caregivers are required to inform the school of pupil absences or lateness, and be accessible for arrival check contact. Parents/guardians/caregivers are responsible for providing the school with complete and current emergency/safety arrival contact information.

### 2.0 DEFINITION OF ARRIVAL CHECK

Parents are to inform the school if a pupil is late or absent. In the event that the school has not received notice of lateness or absenteeism, the school will attempt to contact the parent, or person(s) whose name has been provided to the school as a person to contact in an emergency situation.

### 3.0 DESIGN OF ARRIVAL CHECK PROGRAMS

- 3.1 Arrival check programs are to be developed and implemented by schools with advice from school councils, home and school if applicable, parents, school personnel, and other community members.
- 3.2 The design of specific procedures should reflect local needs and the particular circumstances of the school and community.
- 3.3 The roles and responsibilities of parents, guardians, caregivers, pupils, the school, school councils, and others should be clearly identified and documented. This information should be communicated clearly and effectively to all those who have an interest in arrival check programs.
- 3.4 Arrival check programs are designed to be flexible, with a view to achieving overall effectiveness and efficiency.

### 4.0 STAFF AND PARENT/GUARDIAN/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each school program by design will reflect the local needs and school conditions. The following outline of responsibilities only address three key participants in the program. Each school will need to outline the role and responsibilities of those who will carry out the program.

#### 4.1 Parents, Guardians, Caregiver are responsible for:

- their children's safety
- timely communication regarding planned pupil absences, including length of absence, if known

- timely communication regarding pupil lateness
- providing the school with complete and current emergency information to enable the school to make any necessary arrival check follow-up contacts
- providing the school with an alternate means to make contact if access to telephone is not available.

**4.2 Principals are responsible for:**

- ensuring that the attendance of pupils for every school day is recorded
- developing, implementing and communicating an arrival check program
- communicating reliable methods for parents, guardians, and caregivers to communicate the planned absences, particularly outside of school hours eg. Voice -mail messaging system, school e-mail address, school telephone number
- leading a yearly review of the attendance check program to modify as necessary. The review may include: consideration of languages spoken in the school for communication of the program to parents, revision of procedures to continue the effectiveness of the program, training as required for updating attendance record-keeping, etc.

**4.3 Teachers are responsible, under the direction of the Principal:**

- to carry out the supervisory duties assigned by the Principal for recording pupil attendance and reporting it to the school office.

**4.4 Others:**

- Other school personnel are responsible, under the direction of the Principal, for carrying out the policy, including follow-up calls to be made for unexplained student absence in accordance with the school policy and the signed information provided by the parent. School personnel are to report to the Principal any contacts that cannot be made.

**5.0 ATTENDANCE**

- 5.1 Every child of compulsory school age shall attend school on every school day unless excused from attendance or as otherwise scheduled.
- 5.2 The parent or guardian of a child who is required to attend school shall cause the child to attend.
- 5.3 A pupil shall attend classes punctually and regularly.
- 5.4 When a pupil returns to school after an absence, a parent of the pupil shall give the reason for the absence orally or in writing, as a Principal requires.
- 5.5 Attendance will be taken and recorded each day by the teacher, at the beginning of classes in the morning and in the afternoon.
- 5.6 The names of students who are absent shall be reported to the office each day at the beginning of classes in the morning and in the afternoon. Reasons for absence, when known, shall be reported.
- 5.7 Unexplained absences of students shall be followed up in accordance with the School Arrival Check Program.

**6.0 COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (FIPPA)**
- **MUNICIPAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (MFIPPA)**

- 6.1 The Education Act permits boards and specifically Principals to collect information for inclusion in a record in respect of each pupil enrolled in the school. The Guideline for the OSR—Ontario Student Record, governs the use of pupil records.
- 6.2 The Arrival Check Policy requires that personal information collected and used in the implementation of this policy be in accordance with the FIPPA and MFIPPA.
- 6.3 The FIPPA permits an institution to use personal information if consent has been given by the parent/guardian to use it, and only for the purpose for which it has been obtained.
- 6.4 When collecting personal information about a pupil, the form shall include a statement about the legal authority to collect that information, the intended purpose(s) of the

information and the title of Board staff who can be contacted regarding questions about the collection of information.

- 6.5 The use of information for the implementation of the Arrival check Policy needs to be communicated to parents/guardians, when requesting this information. The information cannot be used for other purposes unless such as been stated.
- 6.6 Parent/guardians need to provide authorization by signature for the use of the information.

## **7.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

- 7.1 The Arrival Check Program should be delivered in a manner that complements other school and community safety programs and initiatives.
- 7.2 Information about the school's arrival check program and about the roles and responsibilities should be communicated clearly by the Principal to school staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, and school councils.
- 7.3 Reliable methods for leaving messages with the school regarding absences and lateness need to be in place and communicated clearly to all.
- 7.4 Procedures could be modified due to recurring circumstances (eg. Regularly scheduled medical appointments) or unusual circumstances, such as inclement weather.
- 7.5 Principals should take into account that a language other than English may be spoken in the home.
- 7.6 Arrival check programs should specify the steps that will be reasonably made to make contact when a student is late or absent.
- 7.7 Where parents decline to provide contact information, the school is advised to notify the parents/guardians in writing of the inability of the school to carry out arrival check steps for their children.
- 7.8 Arrival check programs should specify steps that will be taken when follow-up contact cannot be reasonably made.
- 7.9 Police will be contacted when the school and the home cannot reasonably account for the failure of a child to arrive at school and the safety of a child may be at risk (excludes extended absences).

## **8.0 REFERENCES**

### **Government Documents**

- Education Act:
  - Part X111: Safe Schools
  - Section 265 (1) (c): Duties of a Principal to register students, record attendance, collect information
  - Section 21 (1) Compulsory Attendance;
    - (2) Where attendance excused;
    - (5) Duty of parent to cause child to attend school
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123, February 2, 1999
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

### **HWDSB Strategic Directions**

- Creating Safe and Equitable Learning Environments (safety and well-being of students)

### **Related HWDSB Policies**

- Safe Schools Pillar Policy

## **SAMPLE LETTER and FORM to explain the Policy and Collect the Required Information**

(Note: this is an introductory letter and attaches a copy of the school program, along with a data collection form; the content could also be included in a newsletter.)

### SCHOOL LETTERHEAD or NEWSLETTER MASTHEAD

Dear Parents/Guardians:

#### ARRIVAL CHECK PROGRAM

The Ministry of Education requires all school Boards to have a Safe Arrival Policy for their elementary schools. It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School board, for all elementary schools to develop and implement an Arrival Check Program as part of the daily procedure of school attendance taking. Parents, guardians and caregivers have the prime responsibility for the safety of their children. In order to enable the school to account for any pupil's absence, parents/guardians are required to inform the school of pupil absences of lateness and be accessible for arrival check contact. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with complete and current emergency/safe arrival contact information.

In order to carry out the arrival check program, it is important for parents to inform the school each time that their child is going to be absent or late. In the event that your child does not arrive at school and the school has not been notified about an absence or late arrival, school staff will contact you as soon as possible.

Absences can be called in at any time. We have an answering machine (service) and messages are checked at the beginning of each day. The number is \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have questions please feel free to ask your child's teacher or call the school office.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with us in this important daily activity to make sure that your child arrives at school.

Please complete the information on the Arrival Check Program attached and return it to school by \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

(Name)  
Principal

**SAMPLE of ARRIVAL CHECK PROGRAM INFORMATION FORM**

**ARRIVAL CHECK PROGRAM/EMERGENCY DATA INFORMATION FORM**

Family Surname(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the information below as applicable:

**Children in the School:**

Child's Name	Homeroom	Walker	Bus Rider	Medical Info (allergies, meds, etc.)

**Emergency/Arrival Check Contact Information:**

In the event of your Child's unexplained failure to arrive at school, parents/guardians can be contacted at:

Mother/Legal Guardian's Full Name:		Father/Legal Guardian's Full Name:	
Cell Phone Number		Cell Phone Number	
Home Phone Number		Home Phone Number	
Work Phone Number		Work Phone Number	
Name of Workplace (opt.)		Name of Workplace (opt.)	

If no contact can be made with a parent/legal guardian, alternate contacts will be made as provided by your below. Be sure these contacts know this information has been provided to the school.

Alternate Contacts:	Name	Relationship to Family	Phone number:
First Alternate Contact:			
Second Alternate Contact:			
Third Alternate Contact:			
Student's Cell (optional)			

Your children should know what they are to do if they re ever dismissed early because of inclement weather or other emergency. Please make sure your children know these instructions. So we know, please outline below, the instructions that they have been given. Dismiss as usual  or

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Legal Authority to Collect Personal Information:** The information on this form is collected under the Education Act and in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The information will be used in an emergency and in the event of a pupil's unexplained failure to arrive at school. Information on this form will become part of the Ontario Student Record. Please contact the School Principal with any questions about the collection of this information.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE LETTER where contact was not possible  
(Note—it may be necessary to send by priority post or registered mail)**

**SCHOOL LETTERHEAD**

**Arrival Check—A Shared Responsibility**

Date:

RE: *Student's Name & Class*

Dear *Parent/Legal Guardian*:

It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School board, that all elementary schools implement an Arrival Check Program, as part of the daily procedure of school attendance taking.

Your child was absent from school on \_\_\_\_\_. We have no record of an adult from your home, initiating contact with the school, to explain this absence.

We tried to contact you, using the phone numbers that you provided (copy attached), but we were unsuccessful. Please contact the school Office Administrator at \_\_\_\_\_ to provide updated numbers.

In the future, prior to a known absence, I ask that you contact the school anytime before 9:00 a.m. We have voice mail for your convenience.

Please sign and return this letter. It is the only way we can confirm that you have received this important message.

Thank you,

Principal

Signature \_\_\_\_\_; Date: \_\_\_\_\_